

## Three monks self-immolate in Tibet

[UPDATE 12 April 2012] Both Chimey Palden and Tenpa Darje are confirmed to have died as a result of their injuries suffered during their joint self-immolation protest on 30 March. Both monks had been taken to a local hospital by Chinese police and held under strict security. Chimey Palden died the day after the protest, whilst Tenpa Darje survived until 7 April.

Despite requests from the monks' families and their monastery, the Chinese authorities refused to hand over the monks' bodies so that traditional rituals could be performed. Instead the authorities cremated the bodies and handed over the ashes.

Following the self-immolations, the situation in Barkham has been described as "tense", with a large presence of armed security personnel. The authorities have set up a blockade outside Tsodun monastery restricting movements to and from the monastery.

Further reading: Phayul | TCHRD

[5 April] Last week three monks self-immolated in Ngaba, eastern Tibet as Tibetans continue to protest against Chinese government's hardline policies. One monk is known to have died, whilst the condition of the other two is unclear. Twenty Tibetans have self-immolated this year, and 33 since February 2009.

On 30 March, two monks from Tsodun monastery self-immolated in Barkham (Chinese: Maerkang) in Ngaba prefecture, Sichuan province.

Chimey Palden, 21 (pictured right top), and Tenpa Darje, 22 (pictured right below), set fire to themselves in a joint protest outside local government offices in Barkham whilst shouting slogans against the Chinese government. Both were taken by security forces to a local hospital. An unconfirmed report has said one of the monks has died. No further information is available on their condition or current whereabouts.

Both monks had previously studied at Kirti monastery in Ngaba, but at the time of their protest were residents of Tsodun monastery. A branch of Kirti monastery, Tsodun monastery is located just over 80km way from Barkham and houses about 300 monks. On hearing of the protest a group of monks from Tsodun set off to Barkham but were stopped by armed police and forced to return to the monastery.

In 2010 Chimey was detained for a month after he was searched by security personnel during a visit to Lhasa and found to have a photo of the Dalai Lama, an image of the Tibetan national flag and a Tibetan song on his mobile phone.

On 28 March at about 7pm, Lobsang Sherab, a 20 year-old monk, set fire to himself in the main street of Cha township, Ngaba prefecture, Sichuan province. During his protest, Lobsang shouted slogans against China's policies which discriminate against Tibetans. He died at the scene.

Local Tibetans attempted to take possession of Lobsang's body but armed security personnel intervened and took the body away. Chinese officials have ignored pleas from the family to return the body so that traditional rituals can be performed.

Lobsang had become a monk at the Ganden Tenpeling monastery in Raruwa, Ngaba at the age of nine. In October 2011 he began studies at Kirti monastery in Ngaba and had returned home two days before his protest.

Further reading:

Chimey Palden & Tenpa Darjey: ICT I RFA

Lobsang Sherab: TCHRD I RFA

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